ÆSOP'S FABLES

RETOLD FOR CHILDREN

BY

ELIZABETH HARDIE

THOMAS NELSON & SONS, LTD.
LONDON, EDINBURGH, NEW YORK
TORONTO, AND PARIS

CONTENTS.

71 The Angler and the
Little Fish 51
13 The Man and his Goose 53
The Wolf and the Lamb 54
15 The Two Frogs 58
16 The Fox and the
Countryman 59
18 The Dog, the Cock, and
20 the Fox 62
22 The Two Goats 64
23 The Frogs who wished
for a King 66
25 The Hare and the Tor-
28 toise 68
29 The Fox without a Tail 72
The Daw in Borrowed
32 Plumes 76
38 The Cock and the Jewel 79
40 The Frogs and
44 Fighting Bull
46 The Sheep-Biter
The Fir Tree and
49 Bramble . 87

CONTENTS

The Stag in the Ox-	4	The Dog and the	
House	89	Shadow	128=
Jupiter and the Camel.	92	The Wolf and the Lion	
The Fox and the Stork	94	The Eagle and the	
Hercules and the Car-		Crow	130
ter	97	The Ant and the Grass-	
The Peacock and the		hopper	1322
Magpie	98	The Owl and the Grass-	
The Eagle and the Fox	100	hopper	136
The Old Lion	103	The Wolves and the	
The Cock and the Fox	105	Sheep	138
The Fox and the Sick		The Horse and the	
Lion	108	Loaded Ass	140
The Partridge and the		The Ass carrying Salt .	142=
Cocks	110	The Woodman and the	
The Peacock's Com-		Snake	145
plaint	112	The Wolf in Sheep's	
The Stag and the Fawn	114	Clothing	147
The Cat and the Mice.	116	Clothing The Dog and the	
The Stag and the		Wolf	150
Pool	118	The Lion, the Bear,	
The Mischievous Dog .	120	and the Fox	154
The Travellers and the		The Archer and the	
= Bear	122	Lion	156
The Ass, the Lion, and		Mercury and the Wood-	
the Cock	125	man	158

INTRODUCTION.

In this book you are going to read a number of stories in which animals are the actors and speakers. Such stories are called Fables. It may seem strange to you to find animals behaving in all respects like human beings, but to the people of long, long ago such conduct on the part of lions, bears, foxes, stags, dogs, birds, and so on, was not at all extraordinary. In very early days men lived in little groups in the forests, and they hunted the animals for food just as the animals hunted each other. They then knew more about the animals than they knew about their fellow men, so it was quite natural that they should tell tales about the birds and beasts amongst whom their lives were

spent. The oldest of all the tales which have come down to us are about animals.

The men of the very early world saw no difference, except in form, between themselves and the animals. Indeed, they believed that they were kin to the animals, and certain tribes believed themselves to be specially connected with certain animals. Such being their belief, they, of course, thought that animals could talk and act just as they did.

Esop's Fables. We know very little about Esop, except that he was a Greek slave and that he lived some five or six hundred years before the birth of Christ. It is said that he was ugly and deformed, and there is a marble bust at Rome which represents him as such. But whatever his body may have been, his mind was very sharp and clear. Some of the stories he may have invented; others were old tales which had been told

in the East long before Æsop was born. So far as we know, they were not written down in Æsop's lifetime, but were passed on by word of mouth. Many of them found their way in later times into Greek and Latin books.

Æsop was a very shrewd man, and he used these tales to teach his hearers worldly wisdom. At the end of each story you will find a moral-and no doubt you will skip it. But the object of the story in Æsop's eyes was to teach a lesson. To you the story is everything and the moral nothing; but to Æsop the moral was everything, and the story was only meant to fix the moral firmly in the minds of his hearers. In all ages it has been found that truth in the form of a story grips the mind much more firmly than bald truth. / La Fontaine, the Frenchman who made delightful poems out of many of Æsop's Fables, says :-

"These fables are much more than they appear—

The simplest animals are teachers here.

The bare dull moral weariness soon brings; The story serves to give it life and wings."

There is another reason why Æsop used animal tales to teach lessons of warning and guidance. If the slave had told stories about greedy or foolish or vain people, some of his hearers might have fitted the cap on to themselves and been offended with him. When, however, he made animals the actors and speakers in his story, nobody could be offended, and all, therefore, might learn a lesson.

In reading the stories you will notice that each animal has always the same character. The fox is always sly and cunning; the lion is always bold and rather good-tempered; the wolf is always fierce; the peacock is always vain; the ass is always stupid, and so on. Each animal stands for some virtue or some vice. We still say that a man is as cunning as a fox, as fierce as a wolf, as vain as a peacock, or as stupid as an ass. It is interesting to note that the men and women who lived more than two thousand five hundred years ago first gave these animals their characters.

Munwar Bed

query hould follow to the admin

Moh & Ashraf Beg Hehas willen

ÆSOP'S FABLES.



THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

ONE day an ass found the skin of a lion. He put it on, and went into the fields and woods, and terrified all the flocks and herds that saw him. At last he met his master and tried to

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

frighten him also; but the good man, seeing his long ears sticking out of the lion's skin, knew him at once. The master was carrying a stout stick, and with it he taught the ass that even although he dressed himself as a lion, he was really no more than an ass.

Moral.—He who pretends to be other than he really is will always be found out, and will just be like "the ass in the lion's skin."



THE CROW AND THE PITCHER.

A crow was ready to die of thirst. Seeing a pitcher in the distance, and thinking there might be water in it, he flew towards it with joy. When he reached it he found water in it, but so near the bottom that with all his stooping and straining he was not able to reach it. Then he tried to overturn the pitcher, so that he might be able to get a few drops out of it. But, alas! he was not strong enough to do this.

At last, seeing some pebbles lying near the place, he threw them one by one into the pitcher, and thus at length raised the water up to the very brim. By this means he was able to quench his thirst.

Moral.—Necessity is the mother of in-



THE PROUD FROG.

An ox grazing in a meadow chanced one day to put his foot down amongst a number of young frogs and trod one of them to death. When mother frog came home the young ones told her that the hugest beast they had ever seen in their lives had killed their brother. "What!" cried mother

frog, "was it so big?" and she began puffing and swelling her speckled chest to a great extent. "Oh, bigger, far bigger," said they. "And so big?" asked she, swelling her chest still more. "Indeed, mamma," said they, "if you were to swell until you burst, you would never be so big." The mother strove yet again, and swelled until she did burst.

Moral.—Never pretend to be greater than you really are, or you will be sure to share the fate of the frog.

THE LION AND ASS HUNTING.

One day a lion and an ass went out together to hunt. In the course of their travels they came to a cave in which there lived a number of wild goats. The two hunters agreed that the ass should go into the cave and frighten them, while the lion should remain at the entrance and kill them as they came out. The ass then went in, and began to kick and bray, and to make all sorts of frightful noises. When the lion had killed as many goats as he wanted, the ass asked, "Have I not done my task well?" "Yes, indeed, you have," said the lion. "Had I not known that you were an ass, I should have been frightened also."

Moral.—While any one behaves in a silly way, and forces his friends by his conduct to liken him to an ass, he will never gain honour, even should he sometimes do a clever thing.



THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

ONE day a hungry fox chanced to come into a vineyard where there were many branches

of charming ripe grapes. They were nailed up to a trellis so high that they were out of the fox's

reach. He leaped and leaped till he was quite tired, but was unable to reach one of them. At last he said, "Let who will take them; they are green and sour, so I'll let

them alone."

Moral.—It is well for vain persons that they should remember never to pretend a dislike to everything they cannot obtain, because others will not believe them.





THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

One day a dog was lying in a manger full of hay. A calf, being very hungry, came near, and tried to eat the hay. The dog, however, was envious and ill-natured, and sprang up snarling and snapping at the calf, and would not let him touch it. Upon this the calf turned to his companions and said, "What a selfish dog. He cannot eat the hay himself, and yet he will not let those eat it who can."

Moral.—If you do not wish for a thing yourself, do not stand in the way of others who wish to have it.

THE WOLF AND THE KID.

A GOAT one day went out to get some food. Before leaving home she told her young kid that as soon as she shut the door he was to bolt it, and was not to open it to any one till she should return. A wolf, who was hiding near by, heard the advice given by Mrs. Goat to her kid. He thought to himself, "What a fine dinner that kid would make!" For a short time he lay quite quiet, then he stole cautiously up to the door, and imitating the voice of the mother goat, asked the kid to let him in. The kid, looking out of the window and seeing the wolf, told him that he was a cheat, and that he would not open the door. "No matter how much you try to imitate the voice of a goat, your appearance is much too like that of a wolf for you to be trusted."

Moral.—Always listen to the advice of those who have had more experience than yourself. Your father and mother know the dangers which lie in your path, and if you follow their advice you cannot go far wrong.



THE MONKEY AND THE CATS.

Two cats, being very hungry, looked about for something to eat. After searching for a time they found a cupboard open, and, creeping inside, stole a piece of cheese. When they had scampered away with it to a place of safety, they began to think of sharing it between them. They broke it into halves, but they could not agree as to which piece each was to have; so, after a great deal of talking, they made up their minds to go to law. As judge in the matter they chose a cunning monkey, who they thought would deal fairly with them.

"Let me see," said the judge, looking very wise. "In the first place, I must have a pair of scales." When he had got the

scales he sat down. "Ay," said he, putting a slice in each scale, "this one is much heavier than the other." He thereupon bit off a large piece, telling them that he would manage by that means to make a fair balance. The other scale had now become too heavy. "Dear me, that is very strange!" said the monkey; "but I can easily make it right." And he bit off a second mouthful.

"Stop, stop!" cried the poor cats; "we will be content with what is left for our share."

"Not at all," replied the monkey; "the law must take its course. Although you are content, my friends, justice is not." He then, looking very sternly at the two cats, nibbled first at one piece and then at the other, till they saw that their cheese would soon disappear altogether. They then begged him humbly not to put himself to any more trouble, but to give them what remained of the cheese.

"That is a very good joke," laughed the monkey. "But not quite so fast, I pray you, my dear friends. We must be just to ourselves as well as to you. What is left is your judge's payment." As he said this, he crammed the rest of the cheese into his mouth, and with a very polite bow bade them both good day.

Moral.—We learn from this fable that it is better to put up with a trifling loss than to run the risk of going to law and losing all that we possess. There is an old English proverb which says: "Lawyers build their houses upon the heads of fools."



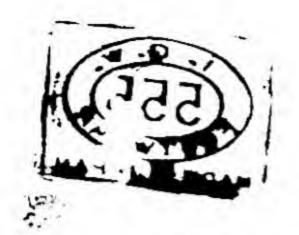
white the service of the service of

THE KID AND THE WOLF.

A KID one day, having got upon the roof of a shed, saw a wolf below, and at once began to heap all manner of reproaches upon him. He told the wolf that he was hated by all the other animals because of his cruel deeds. The wolf, looking up, said, "You vain creature, you think, because you are in a coward's castle, that you can annoy me as you will with insulting language. It is only the place upon which you are mounted that protects you for the present."

Moral.

Fools who can insult their betters,
Are sorely to their station debtors;
The thing that so abusive makes you,
Is just the place that now protects you!





THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

A LION, overcome with heat and weary with hunting, lay down to rest under the spreading boughs of a thick, shady oak tree. It happened that while he slept a family of playful mice ran over his back and waked him. Starting up in a rage, he put his huge paw upon one of them, and was just going to kill it, when the little mouse humbly and in pitiful tones begged for mercy. He asked the lion not to stain his noble character with the blood of so mean and small a creature as a mouse. The lion, after thinking over the matter for a moment, let the terrified little creature go.

The grateful mouse said, "Noble lion, I trust I may one day be able to repay your

kindness to me." The lion smiled at the thought of such a little animal ever being able to help him.



Some time after this, while the lion was prowling in search of prey, he ran into a strong net made of ropes, that had been spread for him in the forest by some hunters. He struggled in vain to get free, and roared with pain and terror. The little mouse heard him and ran to his help. It set to work with its sharp teeth; and at last, after a great deal of labour, gnawed through the rope, and set the lion at liberty.

Moral.—This shows that we should not despise the very humblest of beings; the strongest at times may need the help which the weakest can give.

ono ita

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND HIS ASS.

ONCE upon a time there was a miller who lived in a little house beside his mill. One day the miller made up his mind that he would take his ass to the fair and sell it. So he and his boy said farewell to the old dame and started off. They had not gone far when they met a number of girls coming from the town. "Look!" said one of them, "did you ever see such stupid fellows? They are walking when one of them might be riding."

When the miller heard this he bade the boy get up on the ass, while he tramped along by its side. Soon they came to a

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND HIS ASS. 37

Moral.—To be agreeable in one's manners, and self-denying to those who need our help, is very praiseworthy; but if you try to please everybody you will please nobody.



THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

THE same lion, touched by the grateful conduct of the mouse, asked his little deliverer how he could repay him. He told the mouse he might ask anything he chose, and he would certainly get it. The mouse, overcome with ambition at this gracious offer, did not consider so much what was proper for him to ask as what was in the power of his prince to give. With great confidence he asked the lion for his daughter, the young princess, in marriage. The lion at once gave his consent; but when he was giving the royal maiden into the keeping of the mouse, she, like the silly young thing she was, not being careful how she walked,

by chance set her paw upon her bridegroom and crushed him to death.

Moral.—Some people make themselves very miserable by a wrong choice when they have all the good things in the world spread before them from which to choose! If the ordinary power of judgment be wanting, it is not possible for the greatest monarch on earth to make us happy.



120 6 1000

THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

Every one had heard of the fox's cunning; and every one but the goat believed in it. One very hot summer, when all the springs and the brooks were dry, a fox looked about all day in vain for water to drink. He even crept slyly into a farmyard; but the dog saw him, and he had to leave in a great hurry. At last he thought of an old well in the middle of a field near the farm. He ran towards it with all speed. When he came to it, he found the water quite out of his reach. He tried again and again to reach it, and at last tumbled in, heels over head! He was much frightened, but he was not much hurt; and as the water was not very deep, he was glad enough to remain in it for a time. When his thirst was quenched, he

2

THE OLD MAN AND HIS SONS.

An old man had many sons, who were always quarrelling with each other. After trying in vain to make them live together in peace, he one day hit upon the following plan. He took a bundle of sticks, and asked his sons one after the other to break them. They tried with all their might, but in vain, for the sticks were closely and firmly bound together. The father next untied the bundle, and gave his sons the single sticks and asked them to break them. This they did very easily. Then he spoke to his sons in these words,—

"O my sons, behold the power of unity!

If you would but keep yourselves joined

would be able to hurt you; but when you are divided from each other by your quarrels you are weak, and it is easy for your enemies to destroy you."

Moral.—Union is strength.



THE ANGLER AND THE LITTLE FISH.

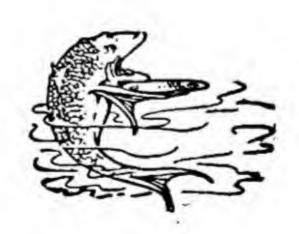
While fishing in a river one day, a man caught a little perch. As he was taking it off the hook, it opened its mouth and began to beg for pity. "Pray," said he to the fisherman, "throw me back into the water again." The man asked what reason the perch had to expect such a favour. The perch replied, "Because at present I am but young and little, and it is hardly worth your while to take me home with you.

52 THE ANGLER AND THE LITTLE FISH.

It would be better for you to catch me some time later when I have grown larger."
"That may be," replied the man; "but I am not one of those fools who give up a certainty for an uncertainty."

Moral.—A bird in the hand is worth two

in the bush.



THE MAN AND HIS GOOSE.

Once upon a time a farmer had a beautiful goose. Every day it laid a golden egg. But the farmer was greedy and covetous, so he made up his mind to kill the goose and cut her up, so that he might obtain the great treasure which he fancied she had within her. He did so, and to his great grief and disappointment, found nothing.

Moral.—Many greedy and covetous people attempt to gain riches and honours at one stroke. As a rule, they fail to obtain their desires. Riches and honours are generally won by hard work and perseverance.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

ONE very warm day a wolf and a lamb chanced to arrive just at the same time on the banks of a clear silver brook, at which they meant to quench their thirst. The wolf stood higher up the stream than the lamb. Nevertheless the wolf, having a mind to pick a quarrel with the lamb, asked him what he meant by disturbing the water and making it so muddy that he could not drink. He told the lamb that if he were a gentleman he would give him satisfaction—that is, he would fight with him. The poor lamb, overcome with fear at the thought of such a thing, told the wolf, in as mild a tone as possible, that he could not understand how

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

(uni.

he could be making the water muddy, since the stream flowed from the wolf to him, and



therefore could not be disturbed until after it had passed the wolf.

"Be that as it may," replied the wolf,

"you are a rascal; and I have been told that you spoke evil of me behind my back about half a year ago."



"Upon my word," said the lamb, "that is very strange, because at that time I was not born."

The wolf, finding it no good to argue

longer against the truth, fell into a great passion. Drawing nearer to the lamb he shouted, "Sirrah, if it was not you, it was your father, and that's just the same." He thereupon seized the poor innocent, helpless lamb, tore it to pieces, and made his dinner of it.

Moral.—When cruelty and wickedness are joined with power in the same person, it is easy for such a one to find an excuse for tyranny and injustice to those who are weaker and more lowly than himself.



THE TWO FROGS.

ONE hot, sultry summer, the lakes and ponds being almost everywhere dried up, a couple of frogs agreed to travel together in search of water. At last they came to a deep well, and sitting down upon its edge, began to consider whether they should leap in or not. One of them wanted to jump in at once, saying that there was plenty of clear spring water, and that it was a place where they were not likely to be disturbed. "Well," said the other, "all that may be true, and yet I cannot agree to jump in. If the water should happen to dry up here too, how shall we get out again?"

Moral.—The moral of this fable is intended to put us in mind of the old proverb, "Look before you leap."

THE FOX AND THE COUNTRY-MAN.

A rox who was being hotly hunted had run a long way and was very tired. At last he spied a countryman in a wood, and asked him to give him refuge. He pleaded with the man to be allowed to go and hide himself in his cottage till the hounds had passed by. The man gave his consent, and the fox went in and covered himself up with some clothing in a corner. Presently the huntsmen came up, and asked the man if he had seen the fox. "No," said he, "I have not seen him." But at the same time he pointed with his finger to the corner where the fox lay hidden. The hunters did not understand him, however, and called



off their hounds and went on in another way.

Soon after the fox came creeping out of his hole, and was going to sneak off when the man called him back. He asked him if he had no better manners than to go away without thanking the person who had saved his life. Reynard, who had been peeping all the time and had seen all that had passed, answered, "I know well enough how much I am indebted to you; and I assure you,

if your actions had been as agreeable as your words, I should have tried, although in a poor way, to return suitable thanks to you."

THE FOX AND THE COUNTRYMAN. 61

Moral.—Sincerity is a most beautiful virtue; but there are some people who are so cowardly and poor-spirited that they are not capable of exerting it.



THE DOG, THE COCK, AND THE FOX.

A DOG and a cock having made friends went out on their travels together. Night found them in a wood. So the cock, flying up into a tree, perched among the branches, while the dog slept below at the foot. The night passed away and the day dawned. Then the cock, as he always does, set up a shrill crowing. A fox hearing him, and thinking to make a meal of him, came and stood under the tree. He said to the cock,—

"Thou art a good little bird, and hast a fine voice. Come down, then, that we may sing our morning hymn and be glad together." THE DOG, THE COCK, AND THE FOX. 63

In reply the cock said: "Go, my good friend, to the foot of the tree, and call the priest to toll the bell."

But, as the fox went to call him, he was met by a big dog, who jumped upon him, and killed him in a very few minutes.

Moral.—It is a good thing to see the plans of the wicked defeated by the wisdom of the innocent. The wiles of the crafty are often ruinous to themselves.





THE TWO GOATS.

4- 3- 1

The Fat with

On a wild mountain, two goats met on a ledge just over a high cliff. The ledge was so narrow that there was neither room for them to pass each other nor to turn round and go back. A steep rock rose straight above them; a deep dark chasm lay below! What do you think the two goats did?

One of them, with great care, laid himself down on the narrow ledge, pressing as close to the rock as he could. Then the other goat gently and softly stepped over his friend till, safely past him, he could lightly bound away.

The goat that had lain down then drew himself up from his place safe and sound.

He was now free to spring again from rock

to rock, and to eat the sweet grass on the

Two other goats left the valley, and climbed far up the mountain. At length they met on the banks of a wild, rushing stream. A tree had fallen across the stream, and formed a bridge from the one side to the other. The goats looked at each other, and each wished to pass over first. They stood for a moment with one foot on the tree, each thinking that the other would draw back. But neither of them would give way, and they met at last in the middle of the narrow bridge!

They then began to push and fight with their horns, till at last their feet slipped. Both fell into the swift-flowing stream, and were lost in the waters!

Moral.—Do to others as you would that they should do unto you.

THE FROGS WHO WISHED FOR A KING.

The frogs, who lived an easy, free life among the lakes and ponds, gathered together one day and decided to petition Jupiter to let them have a king, who might look after their manners and make them live a little more honestly. At the moment Jupiter happened to be in a very good temper, and he laughed very heartily at the ridiculous demand of the frogs. He seized a log which was lying near by, and, casting it into the pool, cried, "There is a king for you."

The sudden splash which the log made as it fell into the water terrified the little frogs, and it was some time before they ventured near it. Seeing, however, that it lay perfectly still, they at length approached, and finding that there was no danger they leaped upon it, and soon treated it as they pleased. But they were not contented with a king of this sort, and they sent a few of the chief frogs to ask for one of another kind. Upon this Jupiter sent them a stork, who at once began devouring them one after another as fast as he could.

They next applied to Mercury, and prayed him to speak to Jupiter in their behalf, begging him to be so good as to bless them again with another king, or to take away the one which he had given them.

"No," said Jupiter; "since it was their own choice, let the stupid wretches suffer the punishment due to their folly."

Moral.—Be contented with your present condition, bad as it is, lest a change should be worse.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

A hare who was very proud of her speed laughed at a tortoise for his slowness of pace. "Let us run a race," said the tortoise, "the loser to pay the winner five pounds; and let the fox yonder be the umpire." The hare was quite agreeable, and away both started. In a moment the hare got far before her rival, who, with his heavy shell on his back, could move only very slowly.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the hare, as she stopped half way to glance back at the tortoise creeping on far behind; "if you don't ply your short legs a little faster, my friend, I shall be half over the country before you reach the end of the field."

The tortoise said not a word, but toiled on.

69

"Really," said the saucy hare, "if I were to hop on three legs I should get on much faster than you do! I think that I'll take



a short nap. If you were but a yard from the goal I could overtake you with a few bounds."

70 THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

So the hare lay down on the grass and soon fell fast asleep. She did not hear the little feet of the tortoise as he came creep-



ing up to the place where she slept, nor did she see him as he went steadily on past her, never stopping to look behind. Presently the hare awoke, and sprang up,

ready to dart on like the wind. "Where is the tortoise?" she cried, as she sped like lightning towards the goal. "Here," cried the voice of the tortoise from the end of the field; "I've won with ease, although I cannot go so fast as you. Slow and steady has won the race!"

Moral.—The victory is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift.

Industry and applica-

tion make amends for the want of a quick and ready wit.

THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL.

A rox caught in a trap was glad to save his neck by leaving his tail behind him; but upon going abroad into the world, he began to be so much ashamed of his defect, that he almost wished he had died in the trap. However, resolving to make the best of a bad case, he called a meeting of the rest of the foxes, and proposed that they should all follow his example.

"You have no notion," said he, "of the ease and comfort with which I now move about now that I am without a tail. I could never have believed it if I had not tried it myself. But really, when one comes to think of it, a tail is such an ugly, useless thing, that one wonders how foxes have put

up with it so long. I propose, therefore, my worthy brethren, that you should profit by my example, and that all foxes from this day forward should cut off their tails."



Thereupon, one of the oldest stepped forward, and said: "I rather think, my friend, that you would not have advised us to part

74 THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL.

with our tails, if there had been any chance of recovering your own."



Moral.—If men were generally as wise as foxes, they would not suffer the many silly fashions which are daily introduced and for

which scarcely any reason can be given, except the humour of some conceited, vain creature; unless, which is fully as bad, they are intended to excuse some defect in the person that introduces them.



THE DAW IN BORROWED PLUMES.

A NUMBER of jackdaws lived very happily in the tower of an old church. Close at hand was a poultry-yard, belonging to a large house. Among the poultry lived some peacocks, who were allowed to wander about the garden and in front of the house, that their beautiful feathers might give pleasure to all beholders.

Now one of the jackdaws thought that there was nothing so grand as to strut about like a peacock spreading his long tail in the sun, or drawing it up behind him in the shape of a wheel. Oh, if he could only shake all his feathers at once, and let them down as the peacocks did! He would then be the proudest bird in the land.

So he gathered up the peacocks' cast-off feathers, dressed himself in them, and began to strut about the poultry-yard, in the hope of passing for a peacock! But he was mistaken; not only peacocks, but turkeys, guinea-fowls, and even chickens and ducks, mocked him! Being provoked by his foolish vanity, they tore the borrowed feathers from him, pecked him, and drove him out of the yard. The unhappy jackdaw then wished to return to his old friends in the churchtower, and would have been glad to lead his former happy life with them. But they would not look at him, and he was obliged to leave them, and lead a life of loneliness and misery.

Moral.—What we may learn from this fable is, to live according to our station. So long as we keep in the place which God has

78 THE DAW IN BORROWED PLUMES.

given us, we are happy, and people honour and respect us; but nothing is so absurd as the vanity which makes us try to seem finer or richer than we really are.



THE COCK AND THE JEWEL.

A GAY young cock, in the company of two or three hens, was one day raking upon a dunghill, when he happened to scratch up a jewel. The cock knew what it was well enough, for it sparkled with an exceedingly great brightness; but not knowing what to do with it, he tried to hide his ignorance under a gay contempt. So flapping his wings, shaking his head, and putting on an ugly grin, he spoke thus: "Indeed you are a very fine thing, but I do not know what business you have here. I do not mind telling you that I would rather have one grain of good barley than all the beautiful and brilliant jewels under the sun."

Moral.—There are some people in the



world who pretend they are very learned and of very good character, though they are as much strangers to the true uses of virtue the victor, he that is beaten will be driven out of the meadow, and will take refuge here in the marshes, and it is quite possible that he will trample upon some of us. So you see we may be more affected by this

dispute of theirs than at first you were

aware of."

Moral.—The poor timid frog had just reason for its fears and suspicions. It is scarcely possible for great people to fall out without drawing many of those beneath them into the quarrel, and no matter what becomes of the former, the latter are sure to suffer.



THE SHEEP-BITER.

A CERTAIN shepherd had a dog upon whose faithfulness he depended very much. Whenever he found it necessary to be away from home, he always placed this dog in charge of the flock. In order to encourage the dog to do his duty well and cheerfully, the shepherd fed him always on sweet curds and whey, and sometimes gave him a few extra crusts. Yet, in spite of this, no sooner was his back turned than the treacherous dog attacked the flock, and worried the sheep instead of defending them. The shepherd being told of the wickedness of the dog, made up his mind to hang him. When the rope was round the dog's neck, he began to argue with his master, asking him why he



was going to treat him so cruelly, seeing he had only committed one or two crimes.

Why did he not rather have revenge upon the wolf, who was a constant, open, and declared enemy?

"Nay," replied the shepherd, "it is for that very reason that I think you ten times more worthy of death than he. From the wolf I expect nothing but unfriendliness, and can therefore guard against him. On the contrary, I looked upon you as a just and faithful servant, and fed and treated you well; therefore your actions are unpardonable and your behaviour beyond forgiveness."

Moral.—No injuries are so bitter and inexcusable as those which proceed from people we have trusted as friends, and in whom we have placed confidence.

This look not good for soleye Students so so superst into

THE FIR TREE AND THE BRAMBLE.

A TALL, straight fir tree, that rose high above the other trees of the forest, was so proud of his dignity and height that he boasted of his greatness to the smaller trees and shrubs which grew beneath him. A bramble who grew below was much displeased with the haughty and boastful manner of the fir tree. He therefore took him to task, and asked what he meant by it.

"Because," said the fir tree, "I look upon myself as the first tree of the forest on account of my beauty as well as my height. My highest twig shoots up into the clouds, and my branches spread themselves out into the air very beautifully, and are always green

88 THE FIR TREE AND THE BRAMBLE.

and fresh. You, on the other hand, lie grovelling upon the ground, always exposed to the danger of being crushed by every foot that comes near you. The drippings which fall from my leaves make you rotten."

"All this may be true," replied the bramble, "but when the woodman has marked you out as one of the trees to be cut down for public use, and when you feel the force of his axe at your roots, I am mistaken if you would not be glad to change places with the lowliest of us."

Moral.—The higher our position in life the more likely are we to be exposed to danger and temptation.

THE STAG IN THE OX-HOUSE.

One day a stag was hunted out of his lair in the thick bushes of a forest, and the hounds being close upon him, he made towards a

farm. Seeing the door of

an ox-house open, he rushed in, and hid himself under a heap of straw. One of the oxen turning his head about, asked him what he meant by venturing into such a place as that, where he would be sure to be found out.

"Oh!" said the stag, "if you will only



be kind enough to protect me so far as you can, I hope I shall be

safe. I intend to fly from here as soon as all is quiet again."

Well, he stayed there till towards night. In came the herdsman with a bundle of fodder, and never saw him. All the servants of the farm came and went, and not one of them saw anything amiss. Even the bailiff himself came, as he was supposed to do, and looked in to see that all was right, but even he walked away no wiser than the rest. After this the stag was overcome with joy, and began to thank the good-natured oxen, telling them that they were the most obliging people he had ever met with in his life.

One of them answered him in very grave tones, "Indeed we wish nothing more than to have it in our power to help you to escape. But there is one person you little think of who has a hundred eyes. If he should happen to come in, I would not give a straw for your life."

In the meantime the master had returned home from a neighbour's house, where he had been invited to dinner, and as he had been thinking that his cattle looked very thin of late, he went into the ox-house, and called to one of his men, and asked why the oxen had not got more fodder. Then, looking round about, he asked, "Why are you so sparing of your litter? Pray scatter a little more here. And these cobwebs-but I have spoken so often that unless I do it myself-" As he went on prying into everything he chanced to look where the stag's horns were sticking out of the straw. On seeing the horns, he raised a hue and cry, called all his people about him, and killed the poor stag.

Moral.—If you want a thing done well, do it yourself.

JUPITER AND THE CAMEL.

The camel once placed before Jupiter a petition complaining of the hardships of his case in not having, like bulls and other animals, horns, or any other weapon of defence with which to protect himself from the attacks of his enemies. He prayed that he might be given something with which he might fight his foes.

Jupiter could not help smiling at the speech of the great, silly beast. He, however, refused to consider the request of the camel, and told him that, so far from granting his request, he would in future take care his ears should be shortened, as a punishment for his impertinent demands.

HERCULES AND THE CARTER.

As a lazy countryman was driving his cart along a deep muddy lane the wheels stuck so fast in the clay that the horses could not draw them out. Upon this he began to bawl and pray to Hercules to come and help him. Hercules, looking down from a cloud, bade him not lie there, like an idle fellow as he was, but get up and put his shoulder to the wheel, telling him that this was the only way for him to obtain his help.

Moral.—Providence helps those who help themselves.



THE PEACOCK AND THE MAGPIE.

ONCE upon a time the birds met together to choose a king. The peacock, who was most anxious to be chosen, showed off his gay feathers, and thus won the admiration of many of the birds, who voted in favour of his becoming king. Just as they were going to proclaim him, however, the magpie stepped forward into the middle of the crowd, and addressed the new king thus: "May it please your Majesty-elect to permit one of the most unworthy of the birds to place before you his suspicions and fears? We have chosen you for our king, we have put our lives and fortunes into your hands, and our whole hope and trust is in you. If,

therefore, at any time, the eagle, or the vulture, or the kite should sweep down upon us, as it is very likely they may do, will your Majesty graciously dispel our fears, and clear away our doubts about that matter by letting us know how you intend to defend us against them?"

This question made the whole assembly think deeply for a few minutes. Then they began to give opinions on the subject, and soon one and all agreed that they had chosen badly and that another king must be selected. From that time the peacock has been looked upon as a vain pretender, and the magpie as the greatest speaker amongst all the tribes of birds.

Moral.—Beauty and form, in the choice of a ruler, should not be so much thought of as virtue and power.

S&Glai.

THE EAGLE AND THE FOX.

An eagle that had a family of young ones was one day anxiously looking about for something to feed them with. Suddenly she chanced to see a fox's cub that lay basking in the sun. She made a swoop down upon it, and seized it immediately. Before she had carried it off the old mother-fox came home, and seeing the eagle with her young one, pleaded, with tears in her eyes, to have her cub restored to her. The eagle, whose nest was up in a very high tree, thought herself quite safe from all attempts at revenge, and so paid no heed to the sorrowful appeals of the fox.

Greatly enraged at the cruelty of the eagle, the fox sought about for some means

THE EAGLE AND THE FOX.

of punishing her. Remembering that near by some country folk were sacrificing a kid upon an altar in the open fields, she ran thither and, seizing a firebrand from the altar in her mouth, made towards the tree where the eagle had her nest. With this



firebrand she meant to take a terrible revenge on the eagle. She had scarcely climbed the first branches when the eagle, horrified to think of the awful death in store for herself and her family, begged the fox to stop, and at once returned her the cub, safe and sound.

THE EAGLE AND THE FOX.

Moral.—Many wicked people in high positions think nothing of bringing grief and sorrow to their poor neighbours. They are perched upon a lofty position, and have outgrown all feelings of pity for those beneath them. But all such should remember how easy it is for even the weak and lowly to have their revenge.

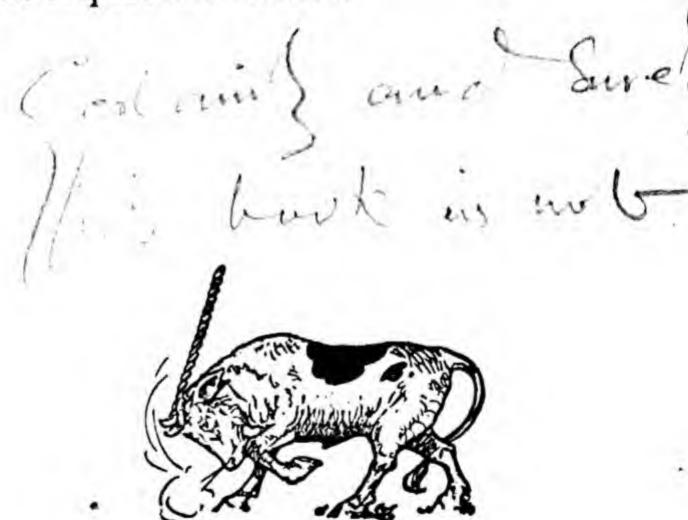


THE OLD LION.

A LION, who was worn out with old age, lay dying in his den in the forest. He was not loved by the other beasts, because he had made many of them suffer. When they heard that he was nigh unto death, they made up their minds to revenge themselves upon him. The boar, with his mighty tusks, drove at him with a stroke that pierced like a bayonet; the bull gored him with his huge horns; and even the ass, when he saw there was no danger, came up too and dashed his heels into the lion's face. Upon this the poor old dying tyrant uttered these words: "Alas! how sad it is to have to bear insults, even from brave foes; but to be spurned by so low a creature as this, who

is the disgrace of nature, is worse than dying ten thousand deaths."

Moral.—He who wishes to be honoured and respected by the rest of his fellow-men should see to it that his actions are worthy such respect and honour.



THE COCK AND THE FOX.

A rox passing near a farmyard one morning was caught in a trap which the farmer had set for him. A cock, happening to pass near by, saw what had taken place, and wishing to have a peep at his old foe, slowly and cautiously drew near to him, but not without horror and dread. Reynard no sooner saw the cock than he said to him in his deceitful way: "Dear cousin, you see what an unfortunate accident has befallen me here, and all upon your account. You see I was creeping through that hedge on my way homewards when I heard you crow, and I thought I would ask how you were before I went any farther. But as I was drawing near you, I met with this disaster, and now I

must ask you, in a very humble manner, for a knife with which to cut this string, or at least to beg you to hide my misfortune till I have gnawed it in two with my teeth."

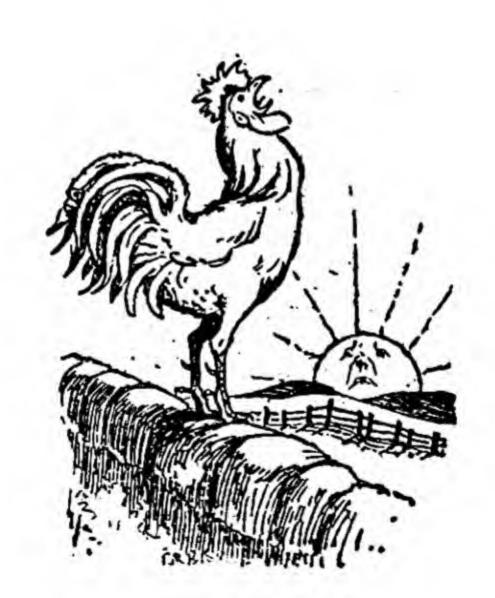


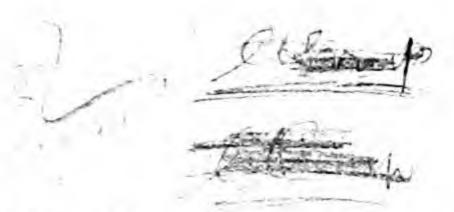
The cock listened quietly to the words of the fox, but without making reply strutted away as fast as he could and told his master, the farmer, all about the matter. The farmer at once seized a good weapon and hurried to the spot where he had set the trap for the

fox. On approaching the well-known farmyard thief, he struck him a blow, which killed him instantly.

Moral.—There is nothing that can be

more highly commended than kindness to those in trouble; but, at the same time, it is well to see that our kindness and consideration is given to those who are worthy of it.





THE FOX AND THE SICK LION.

Once upon a time it was reported that the lion was very sick, and the other beasts of the forest were told that they could not make peace with him in an easier manner than to visit him. Many of the animals went and called upon him. It was particularly noticed, however, that the fox was not among those who called. The lion therefore sent one of his jackals to ask the fox why he was showing so little sympathy and respect to him at a time when he was so dangerously ill, and why he was absent when everybody else was coming to see him.

"I pray you," replied the fox, "present my humble duty to his Majesty, and tell him that I have the same respect for him as ever, and have been on the way to visit him several times. When I reached the mouth of his den, however, I was always overcome with fright by seeing the footprints of my fellow-subjects all pointing forwards, and none backwards. Consequently I never had the courage to venture in."

Now the truth of the matter was that this sickness of the lion was only a sham in order to draw the beasts into his den, that he might more easily devour them.

Moral.—Always pause and consider well any proposal before you comply with it. Many have come to grief by not doing so. It is the essence of prudence not to trust too readily.

1 Sept Sept.

THE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCKS.

A CERTAIN man having caught a partridge, plucked some of the feathers out of its wings, and put it in a little yard where he kept game-cocks. The cocks for a time made the life of the poor partridge very sad indeed by constantly pecking at it and driving it away from the food. He thought that they were very unkind and inhospitable to treat him so, and came to the conclusion that they were the most uncivil people he had ever met. At length he noticed that they were continually quarrelling and fighting with each other. So he comforted himself with the thought that it was no wonder they were cruel to him since they all beTHE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCKS. 111 haved in such an unkind manner to each other.

Moral.—We should try to avoid quarrelling amongst ourselves, because if once begun it becomes a habit, and is likely to make others as well as ourselves unhappy and uncomfortable.





Once upon a time a peacock made a complaint to Juno. He said that he had been very badly treated by not being given such a good voice as the nightingale. He said that the nightingale's song was listened to with pleasure by all who heard it, while he was laughed at because of the ugly screaming noise which he made whenever he opened his mouth.

The goddess was very much vexed at the grief of her favourite bird, and tried to comfort him by saying: "If the nightingale

has a beautiful voice, you have the advantage in point of beauty and largeness of person."

"Ah!" replied the peacock, "but of what use is my great beauty of person when I have not a beautiful voice?"

The goddess told him that there had been given to every creature what was considered best for him: to the peacock beauty, strength to the eagle, to the nightingale a voice of melody, the power of speech to the parrot, and to the dove innocence. Each should learn to be contented with his own particular gift, unless he wished to be miserable.

Moral.—It is absurd for people to complain and torment themselves about things which they know it is impossible ever to obtain. There is no use "crying for the moon."

THE STAG AND THE FAWN.

A stag, who had grown old and mischievous, was in the habit of stamping his feet, shaking his great head, and bellowing so fiercely that the whole herd quaked for fear. One of the little fawns ran up to him one day and said, "Pray, what is the reason that you, who are so brave and fearless at all other times, if you do but hear the cry of the hounds, are ready to fly out of your skin for fear?"

"What you say is true," replied the stag, though I know no reason for it. I am strong enough to defend myself anywhere, and often make up my mind that nothing shall ever make me afraid again. But, alas! I no sooner hear the voice of a hound than

all my courage departs, and I cannot help running off as fast as my legs can carry me."

Moral.—The greatest bully in the world is often the greatest coward. He is inclined to be a tyrant and to insult his companions, and takes every chance of telling them of his great bravery, but when danger draws near he is always the first to fly from it.





THE CAT AND THE MICE.

A CERTAIN house was very badly infested with mice, but at last the master obtained a cat who was a splendid mouser. Each day it caught and ate some of the mice. Finding that their numbers were getting very small, they called a meeting to consider what was best to be done to keep themselves from falling into the jaws of that enemy of their race, the cat. After much talk, they decided that no one should go down below the upper shelf.

That same night the cat saw that the mice no longer came down as usual, and being very him. Away he flew over the plain, and soon left the men and the dogs a long way behind. Unfortunately, however, he ran into a thicket and was caught by his horns. He was held fast, and, struggle as he might, he could not set himself free. In a few minutes the hounds rushed up and dragged him out. He now saw what a mistake he had made in being scornful of his legs. They would have carried him out of danger; and the horns, of which he was so proud, had brought about his death.

Moral.—The charms we most admire in ourselves may be a source of danger to us, while others that we treat with scorn may prove of great service.



THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG.

A CERTAIN man had a dog who was so mischievous and bad tempered that it was found necessary to fasten a heavy log round his neck to prevent him from snapping at people. The dog, far from being ashamed of this badge of shame, was so vain that he looked upon it as a mark of honour. He strutted about the public streets, and looked down with an air of scorn on his fellowdogs. He even went the length of refusing to recognize his old companions.

One day, however, one of his old friends took courage and whispered in his ear that he did not think he need be vain of the burden which he wore round his neck, since it was fixed upon him as a mark of disgrace rather than of honour.

Moral.—Some people will try to gain fame, even if it be only for their follies.



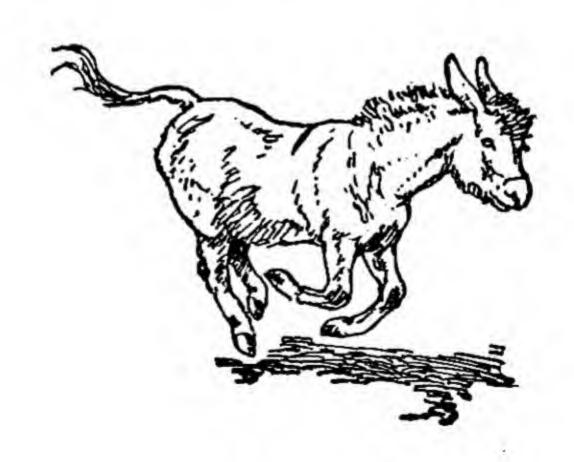
THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR.

Two men, who found it necessary to travel through a forest, promised that, should any danger arise, they would face it together. They had not long begun their journey before a bear came rushing towards them out of a thicket. Seeing the ferocious animal drawing near, one of the men, being light and nimble, climbed a tree. The other traveller, being fat and heavy, could think of nothing better to do than to fall flat upon his face, and, holding his breath, lie perfectly still, while the bear came up and smelt him.

The bear, believing him to be dead, went

as he was going to tear him to pieces, the silly ass spoke thus: "Alas! fool that I was, and knowing well how cowardly I am, thus, by pretending to be brave, to throw myself into the very jaws of death, when I might have been safe and sound in the field."

Moral.—It is unwise to pretend to be courageous, and in this way to expose yourself to unnecessary danger.



The forter in that

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW

As a dog was crossing a brook with a bone in his mouth, he saw his own image reflected in the clear water, and mistook it for another dog carrying another bone. Not content with what he himself possessed, the greedy creature snatched at the prize which he saw below. In doing so he of course dropped the real bone, which fell into the brook and was lost!

Moral.—He who catches at more than belongs to him justly deserves to lose what he has.

him its to

1. 10.

1

fahre Continue

THE WOLF AND THE LION.

As a wolf was carrying off to his den a lamb which he had stolen from a sheep-fold he met a fierce lion. Catching sight of the king of beasts, the wolf dropped the lamb and ran away to a safe distance. The lion at once seized the lamb in his teeth, and as he was carrying it off the wolf called to him that it was very cruel to rob him of his dinner.

The lion cast a scornful look at the cunning wolf, and with a smile replied. "You wish me to believe then, sir, that your friend the shepherd has been making you a present!"

Moral.—When we are unkind to others, we do not like to be treated in the same manner.

(LBCE)

THE EAGLE AND THE CROW.

One day an eagle flew down from the top of a high rock and settled on the back of a lamb. After grasping the poor little bleating creature tightly in his talons, he bore it off to his eerie.

Quite close to the place was a tall elm tree, on which a crow had perched. Having watched the performance of the eagle, the crow made up his mind to try to do the same. Flying down from the lofty elm, he lighted upon the back of a ram, and his claws became entangled in the wool. He struggled hard and attempted to fly, but his efforts were of no avail. His struggles attracted the attention of the shepherd, who, finding the feet of the crow caught in the fleece

of the ram, easily took him, and, having clipped his wings, gave him as a plaything to his children.

Moral.—We may make ourselves utterly ridiculous by trying to imitate the deeds of others.



THE ANT AND THE GRASS-HOPPER.

During the summer a colony of ants was very busy gathering in a supply of corn for the winter. When the cold weather arrived they carried it out of their granaries and placed it in the sun in little heaps by the side of the paths which led up to their dwelling.

Now it chanced that a grasshopper who had outlived the summer had laid by no store of food for the cold weather. Ready to starve with cold and hunger, she went up to the ants and begged them to give her just one grain of wheat or rye. One of the ants asked her how she had spent the

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER. 133 summer, during which she ought to have laid aside a store for the winter.



"Alas," replied the grasshopper, "I passed the time merrily and pleasantly in drinking, 134 THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

singing, and dancing, and never once thought of the winter!"



"If that be the case," replied the ant, laughing, "all I have to say is, that they

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER. 135
who drink, sing, and dance in summer
deserve to starve in winter."

Moral.—Always provide against accidents and future evils.





THE OWL AND THE GRASS-HOPPER.

An old owl sat sleeping in a tree, but a grasshopper who was singing beneath would not let her rest. The noisy grasshopper abused the owl in every way she could think of, telling her she was a disgrace to the rest of her fellow animals. She did not dare to come out during the day to work for her living, but remained shut up in a hollow tree until dark.

The owl asked the grasshopper to hold her tongue, but she would not, and became more impertinent than ever. A second time she begged her to leave off her abuse, but the grasshopper paid no heed. The owl was very angry with the grasshopper, and THE OWL AND THE GRASSHOPPER. 137 thought of a trick by which she might stop her.

"Well," said the owl, "since I have to be kept awake, I am glad that it is by so agreeable a voice. I must confess it is as tuneful as the finest harp. Now I come to think of it, I have a bottle of excellent nectar, which was given to me by my mistress, Pallas. If you like, I will give you a drop to moisten your throat."

The grasshopper was almost dying of thirst, and at the same time was pleased that the owl thought so highly of her voice, so she skipped up to the place very briskly. The owl came forward to meet her, seized her, and in a moment had put her to death.

Moral.—Do to others as you would that they should do unto you.



THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

For a very long time there had been a continual state of war between the wolves and the sheep. At last it was proposed that fighting should cease, but that before the treaty of peace was signed hostages should be delivered on both sides. The wolves proposed that the sheep should give up their dogs, while they, on their part, would deliver up their young ones.

This proposal was agreed to willingly by the sheep. But no sooner had the exchange been made than the young wolves began to cry for their mothers. The old wolves took this chance to cry out that the treaty was broken, and so, beginning war again upon the sheep, who had lost their faithful guardians the dogs, they worried and devoured them without restraint.

Moral.—In all our dealings with others, even in the most private and humble life, we should be very careful how and with whom we trust ourselves. It



is folly for us to give up our friends in order to please our enemies.

THE HORSE AND THE LOADED ASS.

An idle horse was travelling along the road in company with an ass who was carrying a heavy load. Both animals belonged to the same master, who trudged along on foot beside them. The ass was tired to death with his heavy load, and begged the horse to carry his burden for a time. But the horse was ill-natured and selfish, and refused to do so. The ass did his best to drag his weary legs along, but at length he dropped down upon the road and died.

The master tried in many ways to restore the ass, but all to no purpose. When he saw that his efforts were fruitless, he lifted the load from the back of the ass and laid

THE HORSE AND THE LOADED ASS. 141

it on that of the horse, and made him carry the body of the ass as well. So the horse, by refusing to do a small kindness, brought a double burden upon himself.

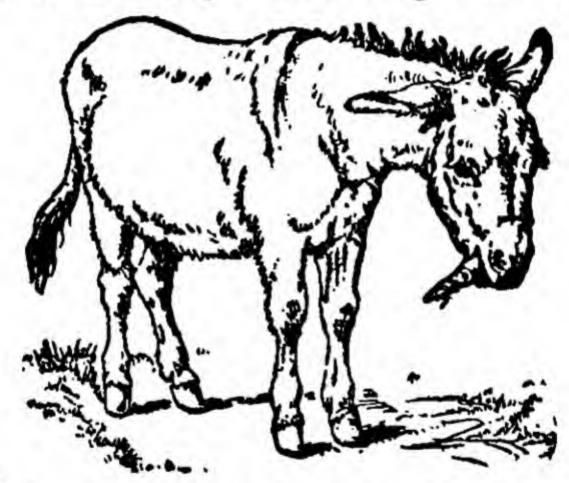
Moral.—To be ready to assist our friends at all times is not only good as an act of humanity, but gives us an opportunity of lightening the burden of life.



THE ASS CARRYING SALT.

A MAN who had an ass heard that salt could be bought at the seaside much cheaper than anywhere else, so, taking the ass with him, he set out to buy some. Having purchased a large quantity, he loaded his ass with it and started for home. On the homeward journey they had to cross a narrow bridge over a river, and while doing so the ass stumbled and fell into the water with his load. The salt began to melt so quickly that the ass lost his load, and was able to reach the bank again. It then continued its journey, not only with a lighter load but with a lighter heart.

Not very long after this the man went again to the seaside, and this time purchased even a heavier load of salt. As they wended their way homewards they came to the bridge where the ass had fallen into the stream. The ass remembered how the accident had helped him to get rid of his



burden on the last journey, so he again stumbled and fell into the water. Once more the load of salt was lost. The master saw that the ass had purposely got rid of his burden, so he made up his mind to cure the animal of its bad habit.

144 THE ASS CARRYING SALT.

A few days later they made another journey to the seaside, and this time the ass was given a load of sponges to carry home. Again the ass stumbled and fell into the stream, but on this occasion he found that, instead of lessening his load, he had more than doubled its weight.

Moral.—It is best to do our duty, however hard it may be, otherwise we may suffer in the end.



THE WOODMAN AND THE SNAKE.

One very frosty and snowy day a woodman found a snake under a hedge almost dead with cold. He felt so sorry for the poor creature that he took it home and laid it upon the hearth in front of a good fire. It had not lain long there before it began to revive, and raising itself erect began hissing, and attacked the woodman's wife and children. The woodman, hearing screams for help, rushed into the cottage. On seeing what was causing the fright, he caught up an axe and soon killed the snake, reproaching him at the same time in these words: "Is this the way, you vile wretch, that you reward him who saved your life? Die as you deserve."

10

146 THE WOODMAN AND THE SNAKE.

Moral.—It is the nature of the unthankful to return evil for good. There is nothing strange in this want of gratitude on the part of the snake; but most sensible people would think it very rash to receive such a vicious creature into their houses.



THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

ONCE upon a time a wolf clothed himself in the skin of a sheep, and mingled with the sheep of a flock. His appearance so completely deceived the shepherd that at night he was shut up in the fold with the sheep. He began to congratulate himself upon his cleverness, and to gloat over the glorious feast he would have after dark when all should be still. He meant to devour the sheep as he chose, and then to escape before his presence had been discovered.

Now it chanced that the shepherd, when he had folded the sheep and had returned home, was asked to go back to the fold to get a sheep for his master's supper. He returned to the fold for this purpose, and



The wolf deceived the shepherd.

See page 147.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING. 149 in the growing darkness he mistook the wolf for one of his flock, and killed him on the spot.

Moral.—The cleverest plotter cannot guard against the harm that deceit may bring upon his own head. This may be said to come true sooner or later.

hitrances ations of the fire !

THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

A LEAN, hungry, half-starved wolf happened one moonlight night to meet with a jolly, well-fed mastiff. After they had exchanged greetings, the wolf said to the dog, "You look very well. I don't think I ever saw a more graceful or comely person. How comes it, I wonder, that you should live so much better than I? I am sure I risk my life fifty times more often than you do, and yet I am almost always half starved."

The dog replied bluntly, "Why, you may live as well as I if you will do the same as I do."

"Indeed! What is that?" asked the wolf.

"Why," replied the dog, "guard my master's house at night and keep it safe from thieves."

"With all my heart will I do this," replied the wolf; "for at present I have a very bad time of it, and I am thinking of changing my hard lodging in the woods, where I have to suffer from rain, frost, and snow, for a warm roof over my head and for good food."

"Then," said the dog, "you need only

follow me."

As they were trotting along together the wolf noticed a crease in the dog's neck, and being very curious asked him what it was.

- "Pugh! nothing," said the dog.
- "Do tell me," begged the wolf.
- "Well," said the dog, "if you must know, I am tied up during the day because I am rather fierce. Lest I should bite people

I am only let loose at night-time. But this is done as much to make me sleep during the day as anything else, so that I may watch the better during the night. As soon as darkness comes on I am turned out, and may go where I please. Then my master brings me plates of bones from the table with his own hands, and whatever scraps are left by any of the family are all given to me, for, you know, I am a favourite with everybody. Now you understand how you are to fare. Come, come along; what is the matter with you?"

"I am not coming," replied the wolf.

"I will leave you to your happiness. I would not be tied by the neck, not even for endless food. Liberty is everything to me. To be a king on the terms you mention would not even induce me to go with you."

Moral.—Æsop, the writer of these fables, had felt the bitter trials of slavery, and

through all his works he expresses the same hatred of slavery and love for liberty. Far better "a crust of bread and liberty," as Pope the poet wrote, than all else the world can give.

> end this book The Lebra l

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX.

ONE day a lion and a bear quarrelled over the body of a fawn which they found in the forest. At length they began to fight for it. The battle was fierce on both sides. The animals tore and worried each other so long that, what with wounds and fatigue, they were too faint and weary to fight any longer. While they lay panting upon the ground a fox chanced to pass by that way. Seeing how tired out the animals were, the fox seized the body of the fawn for which they had been fighting, and carried it off to his den.

When the lion and the bear saw that they were powerless to stop the fox from carrying

off their prey, they said to each other, "Behold the body of the fawn for which we fought. That villain the fox has carried away the prize, and we silly fools have deprived each other of the power to recover it from him."

Moral.—It is much better to be content with little than to fight for much, and by so doing lose all.



THE ARCHER AND THE LION.

1 11 11 - . Gresshill

to the property

. One the was

A skilful archer one day went into the mountains to hunt. The wild beasts, seeing him approach, were filled with the greatest terror, and instantly fled. At length the lion, remembering that the other animals looked upon him as their king, became more courageous, and said that he would attack the man. They might all depend upon his bravery and his courage. While he was thus boasting and preparing to make his attack the archer shot an arrow, which pierced the lion's side.

The lion, in agony with pain, rushed into the woods, and tried to draw out the painful dart with his teeth. While trying to do this a fox came up to him and said,—

THE ARCHER AND THE LION.

157

"Take courage, sire, and again face the enemy."

"That I will not," said the lion. "If the message he sends is so sharp, what must be the power of him who sends it?"

Moral.—Even the strongest are sometimes forced to give way; and it would be well for all to take a hint from the conduct of the lion, and not try to fight an enemy whose strength is greater than our own.



MERCURY AND THE WOODMAN.

A woodman was felling a tree on the bank of a river, and by chance he let slip his axe, which fell into the water and immediately sank to the bottom. Being in great distress for the loss of his tool, he sat down by the side of the stream and mourned his loss bitterly. Upon this the god Mercury, whose river it was, taking pity on him, appeared before him. Hearing the cause of his sorrow the god dived to the bottom of the river, and bringing up a golden axe, asked the woodman if that was his.

Upon the man denying it, Mercury dived a second time, and brought up a silver one. Again the man denied that it was his. So

diving a third time, he produced the very axe which the man had lost.

"That is mine!" said the woodman, glad to have his own axe again. So pleased was Mercury with the fellow's truthfulness and honesty that he at once made him a present of the gold axe and the silver axe.

When the man's companions heard this story, one of them determined to try to secure the same good fortune. So going to the river bank, as if for the purpose of cutting wood, he let his axe slip into the water, and then sat down on the bank and made a great show of weeping.

Mercury appeared as before; and hearing from him that his tears were caused by the loss of his axe, he dived into the stream, and bringing up a golden axe, asked him if that was the one which he had lost. "Ay, surely!" said the man eagerly; and he was about to grasp the treasure, when

